power of association is great: and the merest memento of a wise, enterprising, or virtuous man,—of one who has advanced the cause of civilization, or desolated countries to gratify a restless ambition,—is often sufficient to induce long trains of wholesome thought. When, however, we see his burial-place, his last and narrow home, the man himself passes before the mind's eye; and the impression made, the lesson inculcated, is much more powerful. If a conqueror, we see him bereft of his pomp and power, to obtain which the blood of his dependants had been lavishly shed, and comprehend more fully than before, the folly of risking enduring happiness for that which hardly is before it is not; while, at the same time, the mind is rendered more contented with its sphere; reminded, that whether powerful or weak, rich or poor, all will find the same earthly goal,—the grave; and that the time which intervenes is no short, as hardly to be worth consideration:—

> "A little rule, a little sway,
> A sunbeam in a winter day,
> Is all the proud and mighty have
> Between the cradle and the grave."

Do we contemplate the remains of a good man? All his noble sacrifices, all the fine results of his exertions; the family saved from ruin, the generation advanced in knowledge,—pass vividly before our eyes. The heart involuntarily acknowledges the example, and good seed is sown. If these reflections be correct, it is important to a state that the mouldering remains of all men who have distinguished themselves above their fellows should be preserved and pointed out; and when party-feeling or prejudices lead to their disregard in one generation, it should be the business of the next to repair the omission.

If this were done, we should have statues, obelisks, busts, and temples at the corner of every street, in the centre of every square, and on the parapets of all the bridges. Rivals to Phidias and Praxitiles might arise amongst us; love of the beautiful and the good would be encouraged in the masses, and great changes in society would be effected. The time for it is approaching.

Thus, however, is rambling beyond the Abbey walls. The present state of the ancient monuments there is deplorable. Those who are in authority say they consider these monuments very sacred things, not to be touched without great care and consideration, as more harm than good might be done in attempting to improve their appearance. This is quite true, but there is nevertheless a limit to that forbearance, and this limit has been reached; if steps are not taken in several cases forthwith, nothing will be left to guide the restorer. We should be right glad to see a perfect restoration of the Abbey commenced, including the completion of the centre tower or spire, and the removal of the ugly western towers put up by Wren, who knew little of Gothic architecture, and liked it less. Relative to the erection of these towers, he wrote to the Bishop of Rochester:—"I shall speedily prepare perfect draughts and models, such as I conceive proper to agree with the original scheme of the architect, without any *modern mixtures to shew my own inventions*." Unfortunately, to do is not so easy as to know what ought to be done.

Amongst the earliest improvements to be made in the Abbey is the introduction of stained glass in the rose-window, and twelve lower openings of the south transept. The impulse which has been given lately to glass-painting in England is a pleasant sign, and cannot be too strongly aided. So firm was the belief that English artists in this department were inferior to foreigners, that the Chapter, it is said, had nearly determined on sending to Germany for the work in question; luckily, however, one or two members of it were staunch friends to English art, and succeeded in appointing an English artist; the result of which, it is to be hoped, will fully justify them for so doing.

We have not yet looked into the chapel of Henry VII., *orbis miraculum*, as Leland calls it—one of the most beautiful specimens of the last period of Gothic architecture which England or any other country can boast.* From its roof, "pendent by subtle magic," to the floor, the whole presents a rich lace-work of decoration. Of the roof, indeed, description can give no adequate notion. It is literally—

> "Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells,
> Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
> Lingering—and wandering on, as loth to die,
> Like thoughts, whose very sweetness yieldeth proof,
> That they were born for immortality."

The lover of architecture after studying the perfect development of the pointed style in the minster itself,† with its acutely-pointed arches, its lofty attenuated columns, its infinite divisions, finds here the style which succeeded it when the arch was becoming more horizontal, and when a love of decoration threatened, as indeed did soon afterwards happen, to overwhelm good taste, and lead to the abandonment, for a time, of pointed architecture altogether.

As relates to sculpture, Henry VII.'s chapel presents one of the finest illustrations of early art in England, in the series of figures which fill the countless recesses in the walls. It is said they were once three thousand in number, but this is perhaps doubtful. They display admirable feeling for art, and deserve attentive examination. The carving, too, in the stalls here, is good, and leads us to express regret that so little encouragement is now given to this branch of art in England.

There are a considerable number of artists employed in it at this time, but unfortunately—such is the dominion of fashion (another word for caprice)—it is chiefly, if not wholly, in the imitation of old work, to be afterwards stained and sold as such. The upholsterer is the *arbiter elegantiarum*, and the result is exactly what might be expected under such circumstances. The remedy for this, and many like evils, is to make artistical knowledge more general, and to induce the multitude to talk and think on the subject. With an increased public—an extended circle of admirers and employers—the powers of the artist will be more fully called into play; and the more critical that public is, the more strenuous will the efforts of the artist be to maintain himself superior to his judges.

* Commenced A.D. 1503.

† Commenced A.D. 1220.

INSTITUTION OF CIVIL ENGINEERS.

March 11th, 1845.—Sir John Rennie, president, in the chair.

The discussion was renewed upon the relative merits of the screw and paddle-wheels as methods of propulsion, and was extended to so late a period, that no papers could be read.

It was stated that the Napoléon screw-steamer, in the French post-office service, made on an average, quicker voyages than any of the paddle-wheel steamers of the same power on the station; that in smooth water the latter vessels would make some way, but in rough weather the former was decidedly superior. The same result had been noticed with the Archimedes. When steaming down the river, she was frequently passed by merchant steamers, but by the time she had arrived at Dungeness, if there was any sea up, she had regained her place, and was a-head of the paddle-wheel steamers.

It was thought, however, that with the feathering paddles, invented by M. Cave, and equal power, the Napoléon would have done quite as good work as with the screw.

The peculiarities of the steaming qualities of the Rattler, in spite of her bad build, were fully described. It appeared that in heavy weather, when sailing and steaming, and when it was thought that she was dragging the screw through the water, the dynamometer shewed a very effective exertion of power, and that the slip was extremely small: that when the royal yacht was obliged to shorten sail, because of losing speed by the heeling over of the paddles, the Rattler was enabled to use all her canvas and engine power together, and to gain way in the same proportion as the other vessels lost it. The general impression appeared to be that the experiments were very satisfactory, and if the Rattler had been a well-formed ship, and the power on board had been greater, the results would have been much better.

A good adaptation of the screw was mentioned in the two schooners the Margaret and Senator, built by Messrs. Pim, at Hull, and trading between that port and London. They were fine schooners of 242 tons burthen, fully rigged, but having near the stern two engines, each of fourteen-horse power, connected by wheel-work with a screw propeller. The result of a trial between the Senator and the Shannon, the latter being a regular paddle-wheel steamer of good power, was, that in the voyage between Dublin and London, the Senator arrived in London only ten hours after the Shannon, having consumed only eighteen tons of coal, while the Shannon had used ninety tons; proving that for mercantile purposes, where extreme speed was not essential, but that punctuality was desirable, the screw-propeller, adapted to sailing vessels, was calculated to be of essential service.

A curious letter was read from Lady Bentham, proving, by extracts from documents, that half a century ago, the late Sir Samuel Bentham, to whom was intrusted the building of several men-of-war, was the originator of the introduction of *water-tight bulk-heads*, dividing vessels into compartments, for preventing accidents from leaks, and also for stiffening them. Sir Samuel was aware of the plan having been used by the ancients, and also that the Chinese use the plan now. He also invented the wrought-iron water-tanks, and the metal casks for storing the powder, both being fitted to the shape of the ship. The letter containing these interesting facts, was remarkable for the clearness of its expression and for the accuracy of demonstration, when it was considered that it proceeded from a lady in her seventy-fifth year.

Correspondence.

TO GIVE PLASTER OF PARIS FIGURES THE APPEARANCE OF MARBLE.

Sir,—I am always pleased to communicate to others any item of useful information which I may have gained either in the way of my business, or otherwise; and I often think that The Builder might be made extensively useful, if parties would make it more frequent use of its pages for that purpose.

In answer to the request of "C. T. L." in The Builder of last week, I hope he will find the following methods satisfactory for the purpose of making plaster of Paris casts look like marble.

I am, Sir, &c.,

Charles Newnham.

Put into four lbs. of clear water one oz. of pure curd soap, grated and dissolved in a well-glazed earthen vessel; then add one oz. of white bees'-wax cut into thin slices; as soon as the whole is incorporated; it is fit for use. Having well dried the figure before the fire, suspend it by a twine, and dip it once in the varnish; upon taking it out, the moisture will appear to have been absorbed; in about two minutes' time stir the compost, and dip it again, and this generally suffices. Cover it carefully from the dust for a week, then with a fine soft muslin rag, or cotton wool, rub the figure gently, and a brilliant gloss will be produced.

Or,

Take skimmed-milk, and with a camel's-hair pencil lay over the model until it holds out, or will imbibe no more. Shake off, or blow off, any that remains on the surface, and lay it in a place perfectly free from dust. When dry, it will look like polished marble, and this mode answers equally well with the former, except it be exposed to the wet weather.

N.B. The milk must be well skimmed, or it will not answer the purpose.

COMPETITIONS.—LUNATIC ASYLUM FOR THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET.

Sir,—As you have expressed your desire to assist the efforts of architects in obtaining a better system of competition than at present exists, I beg leave to contribute my mite of experience on the subject.

I am much surprised that the profession can submit to be tricked with false pretences of rewarding the most meritorious (when it is well known that in four cases out of five favouritism has been shewn), without making some effort to bring their taskmasters to account, and thereby prevent them from attempting to make fools of them, and availing themselves of their gratuitous labours.

I believe it is generally admitted that architects as a body are particularly selfish, and